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Contact: Bethany Lesser (202) 224-3873

GILLIBRAND INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE NUTRITION FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

New Measure Improves Quality, Expands Access for 3 Million Children in Daycare and Head Start Programs

Washington, D.C. – With childhood obesity affecting 30 percent of American children, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand introduced legislation today that will improve nutrition for over 3 million young children nationwide. *The Access To Nutritious Meals For Young Children Act of 2009* will improve quality of federally funded meals served at day care and Head Start programs throughout the country and expand eligibility requirements to provide access to thousands more children. This measure is a key part of Senator Gillibrand’s comprehensive agenda to improve childhood nutrition in the United States.

“Healthy eating and good nutrition are critically important for all children, particularly important for infants and young children who are at a critical point in their development,” said Senator Gillibrand, a member of the US Senate Agriculture Committee. “My legislation will help reduce the number of children who are overweight or obese, enhance childhood development and school readiness, and reduce hunger. As a mother and a lawmaker, I believe we should do everything we can to provide access to healthy food and stop short-changing children at a time in life that they can least afford it.”

The Access To Nutritious Meals For Young Children Act of 2009 will strengthen the Child And Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a program funded by the Child Nutrition Act, which provides meals to children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start and child care programs in both day care centers and family child care homes.

Currently, CACFP reimburses providers for up to two meals and one snack per day. Senator Gillibrand’s legislation expands the program to allow three meals and one snack each day.

Right now the program is only available in areas where 50 percent of the population is low-income. Senator Gillibrand’s proposals will expand the program to areas where 40 percent of the population is low-income.

Senator Gillibrand is the first New York Senator in nearly 40 years to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee. In her time in the Senate, Senator Gillibrand has established herself as a leader in efforts to combat childhood obesity and promote healthy nutrition for children and families. She has launched a comprehensive strategy to improve the quality of school lunches, eliminate junk food from our schools, and provide more physical exercise opportunities to school age children.

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